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Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Letter dated 16 January 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you information regarding the implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action entitled "A world fit for children" in the Republic of Uzbekistan (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 63.

(*Signed*) Alisher **Vohidov**
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Annex to the letter dated 16 January 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Progress report on implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action entitled "A world fit for children" in the Republic of Uzbekistan

Introduction

Protecting mothers and children and fostering the conditions necessary for well-rounded, balanced child development and child-rearing, in keeping with universal human values, are issues high on the public policy agenda of Uzbekistan. Even in the extremely difficult circumstances of the transitional period, attending to the health and well-being of mothers and children is a priority objective.

The ongoing national personnel training programme, State health-care reform programme, national formal education development programme and special programme of action to enhance a culture of health in the family and to improve women's health, childbirth and the raising of healthy children, and other programmes, have no precedents in any other country whose economy is in transition.

Since its independence, Uzbekistan has made significant progress towards lowering maternal and child mortality and improving sanitation and disease control and other areas of health care.

Uzbekistan is among the few countries where not only do all children have access to primary education, but also secondary education is universal, compulsory and free of charge. The country has attained near universal literacy, with a rate of 99.3 per cent.

Research conducted by international institutions (see *Social Monitor 2003*, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) and international experts indicates that the Government's level of attention to and expenditure on health care and formal and vocational education in Uzbekistan is the highest among the Central Asian countries and that Uzbekistan has surpassed a number of the long-term targets for the well-being of mothers and children recommended at international forums.

At the same time, Uzbekistan has still not fully resolved the problems inherited from the old system, and the social costs of making the transition to a market economy have given rise to new difficulties which are hindering progress towards the goal of fully protecting the interests of children.

Among these difficulties are the inadequate level of family income, the need to improve the quality of secondary education, the increased incidence of specific socially significant diseases, the lack of regularly collected statistical data to enable monitoring of the use of child labour, and other problems which hinder the swift attainment of a healthy way of life and which require the adoption and implementation of more active measures in this area.

Several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in child welfare issues directly participated in the drafting of the national report and provided information for it: the Children's Fund, the Uzbek Children's Social Integration Centre, the international non-governmental charitable fund Soglom Avlod Uchun ("Healthy Generation"), the Sen Yolgiz Emassan ("You are not alone") fund, the Kamolot youth movement, the Ecosan organization, the Makhallya fund, the Women's Committee, the Public Opinion Research Centre, the Red Crescent Society and others.

It should be noted that, as this report was being completed, 2007 was proclaimed the Year of Social Protection at the function marking the fourteenth anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. A national commission was established by presidential order to draft and implement a corresponding State programme.

Among the major aspects of social welfare set out within the framework of this programme, significant attention is given to tackling a number of problems with a view to increasing the well-being of families, mothers and children. Once again this demonstrates that the protection of motherhood and childhood in Uzbekistan and the creation of decent living conditions are top priorities, and that the Government is meeting its obligations under international instruments in a focused and consistent manner.

2. Main measures to improve the situation of children and to implement the Plan of Action entitled "A world fit for children"

Immediately upon the adoption of the Declaration and Plan of Action entitled "A world fit for children" at the special session of the General Assembly on children in 2002, Uzbekistan took the following steps:

(a) The Declaration and Plan of Action were studied at the national and subnational levels, including the district and makhallya (community) levels, and specific proposals for the implementation of their main provisions were elaborated;

(b) To implement the country's obligations under the foregoing documents, a strategy, priorities and national development goals were elaborated and, within this framework, corresponding programmes (plans) of action were developed at all levels of government to promote the well-being of children in Uzbekistan.

These programmes provide for measures to combat new risks to children, such as neglect, social orphanhood, the spread of drug addiction, substance abuse, alcoholism, violence against children and the spread of socially significant diseases, especially tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS;

(c) The country's existing child protection system was reformed on the basis of national experience, the main provisions of the Millennium Declaration (2000), the document entitled "A world fit for children" (2002), proposals from governmental and non-governmental agencies, civic organizations and local communities (makhallyas and other grass-roots entities), and a new outline for countrywide action and targets for improving people's welfare and children's well-being were drawn up;

(d) A separate section on children's well-being was included in the 2007-2010 interim national welfare strategy paper, setting out government policy priorities in this area.

The attention, efforts and resources of government agencies, NGOs and civic organizations are focused on implementing and further strengthening the social programmes which have been adopted and on drafting and implementing new special programmes for protecting the interests and development of children at the national, regional and local levels, with donor support from international financial and economic institutions.

The fundamental features and ideas of the programmes of action at all levels are based on the provisions, arrangements and guidelines put forward in the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Millennium Declaration, the document entitled "A world fit for children", the programme of cooperation between Uzbekistan and UNICEF and several other documents;

(e) In conjunction with the UNICEF office in Uzbekistan, a system for monitoring the attainment of child welfare targets has been developed and implemented for the regular evaluation of the status of child protection efforts at the local, district, regional and national levels (using 33 specially developed indicators), the identification of existing problems, the development and systematic implementation of focused and targeted measures, the discussion of achievements and the sharing of best practices of the makhallyas, districts and regions.

The document entitled "A world fit for children", the Millennium Development Goals and the 2000-2004 and 2005-2009 country programmes for cooperation between the Government of Uzbekistan and UNICEF have played a major organizational and methodological role in promoting the well-being of children in Uzbekistan. They have made and continue to make a positive contribution in that regard.

It should be noted that what distinguishes all the Government programmes and measures to improve the well-being of children is that they are clearly aimed at making great strides towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, as adapted to Uzbekistan's circumstances; implementing the document entitled "A world fit for children"; strengthening cooperation among various agencies in this process; and fostering local initiatives and the participation of grass-roots organizations.

The many State and special programmes and decisions adopted by the Government of Uzbekistan include the following:

Decision of 25 February 2002 on additional measures to improve the health of women and adolescents;

Decision of 5 July 2002 on measures to achieve priorities for enhancing a culture of health in the family and to improve women's health, childbirth and the raising of healthy children;

Decision of 25 August 2003 approving the regulations on premarital medical check-ups for individuals entering marriage;

Decision of 2 November 2004 on the implementation of the Asian Development Bank project for improvement of the health of women and children;

Ordinance No. 153 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 11 August 2005 on measures to implement the national programme for the fortification of flour;

Ordinance No. 321 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 9 July 2004 on the national programme to reform formal education for 2004-2009.

Uzbekistan has submitted a national report on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on two occasions (in 2002 and 2006). After receiving the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Government drafted and implemented a national action plan for 2002-2006. Work has now been completed on elaborating a national programme to promote the well-being of children, taking into account the recommendations of the Committee following the presentation of the second report in 2006.

In implementation of the foregoing instruments, targeted work is being done to promote the health of women of childbearing age, to lengthen intervals between pregnancies, to prevent early marriages and marriages between close relatives, to prevent unwanted pregnancies, to provide further training for health-care personnel, to provide better equipment to maternity and child health-care institutions and to raise public awareness of reproductive health issues.

In all regions, primary health-care institutions offer medical examinations for women of childbearing age and provide poor women with contraceptive methods to prevent unwanted pregnancies or to increase the intervals between pregnancies.

Uzbekistan is carrying out a range of measures under the mother and child screening programme to prevent hereditary birth defects and mental retardation, and checkups of pregnant women are conducted to detect abnormal development of the foetus. Infrastructure and a population screening system have been established, including modern medical diagnostic equipment and highly skilled personnel. There are 12 screening centres in operation in the regions of Uzbekistan.

Under Government programmes, cooperation is continuing with the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), KfW Bankengruppe, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank for the implementation of maternal and child welfare programmes in the following areas: ensuring safe pregnancies; increasing the effectiveness of perinatal care; extending immunization services; promoting family health; encouraging and raising awareness about breastfeeding; ensuring integrated management of childhood illness; improving reproductive health; preventing iron- and iodine-deficiency disorders; and others.

UNICEF and JICA have been running a joint programme to prevent anaemia among mothers and children since 2003. Under the programme, 2.2 million children up to the age of 5 receive vitamin A capsules twice a year. Thirty-two maternity facilities and 19 rural health-care centres have been certified by UNICEF as child-friendly.

A national programme for the fortification of flour to prevent iron-deficiency anaemia among women of childbearing age and children was launched in 2005 with financing from the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) amounting to $2.8 million.

In accordance with the Uzbek Education Act and the national training programme, the State education policy in Uzbekistan covers preschool education, general secondary education, specialized and vocational secondary education, higher education, postgraduate education, further training, retraining and non-formal education.

Preschool education seeks to promote the development of healthy and well-rounded children prepared for school. It is provided until the age of six or seven at home, in kindergarten and in other institutions.

There are 6,565 preschool institutions in Uzbekistan providing places for 571,100 children, or 22 per cent of the number of children in the relevant age group. More than 59,000 teachers are employed to instruct and educate them.

School reform provides for two stages of secondary education: elementary education (grades 1-4) and general secondary education (grades 1-9).

Elementary education is aimed at developing the basic literacy, knowledge and skills needed to obtain a general secondary education. Children enter first grade at the age of six or seven.

There are 9,773 general-education schools with an enrolment of 5.7 million students in Uzbekistan, including 170 elementary schools, 3,817 nine-year schools, 5,700 senior secondary schools, 86 special schools and boarding schools for children with physical and mental disabilities, and others.

Girls enjoy equal educational opportunities in Uzbekistan. There is no gender-based division in general-education schools and other educational institutions: girls and boys study together.

Orphaned children and children and adolescents without parental care are educated in special children's homes and general-education boarding schools established for them and are fully provided for by the State. For children and adolescents in need of long-term treatment, Uzbekistan has general-education boarding schools with rehabilitation and health-care facilities.

Special general-education schools and boarding schools have been established for children and adolescents with physical or mental disabilities that make it difficult for them to attend an ordinary school. Uzbekistan has established 28 "Mekhribonlik" houses (children's homes) for orphaned children and children without parental care. They are home to 3,037 children.

The number of children in children's homes has decreased in comparison with last year. As a matter of priority, the Government is pursuing a policy of deinstitutionalization and is promoting foster care and guardianship by relatives and foster parents. In accordance with a Government ordinance of 2003, financial support is provided to families which foster children from institutions.

Local makhallya committees are making efforts to ensure that children can return to their biological families, in particular through social and psychological rehabilitation and social pressure on the parents of children in children's homes.

One important means of improving the quality of education is the national formal education development programme (2004-2009), which includes a wide range of measures with the following aims:

To strengthen and develop general-education school infrastructure;

To provide schools with modern study and laboratory equipment, computers, textbooks and study materials;

To improve teaching methods and curricula;

To upgrade the qualifications of teachers, develop an effective system of training and retraining for teachers and raise teacher morale.

Several organizational and practical measures have been taken to increase the activity of juvenile delinquency prevention officers, to make their work more effective with regard to preventing neglect and delinquency among children and adolescents and to improve their cooperation in this respect with juvenile affairs commissions, national education and health agencies, local community bodies and various civic organizations.

Between 2002 and 2006, the Government Commission on Juvenile Affairs, which is responsible for preventing juvenile delinquency and the influence of religious extremism on children, visited all the regions of Uzbekistan to study the effectiveness of measures to prevent juvenile crime and to provide practical and methodological assistance to the relevant units for the purpose of carrying out the measures set forth in the national plan of action to implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The number of crimes committed by juveniles decreased by 12 per cent between 2005 and 2002, and the number of adolescents involved in committing crimes fell by 10.1 per cent.

The number of adolescent workers involved in committing crimes fell by 36.2 per cent, and the number of adolescents neither in work nor in education who were involved in committing crimes fell by 9.6 per cent.

A national centre for the social integration of children was established by a Government decision in 2004, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of work to promote the full social integration of children with physical disabilities, children from needy families or children without parental care.

The centre is working in conjunction with the relevant ministries and agencies to study the problems of children from vulnerable groups and to draft and implement recommendations on the integration of children into society. It is also working with professionals to introduce new, advanced techniques for working with children in need of care as well as to raise public awareness about the need for increasing the level of care for such children.

3. Trends in State funding for child welfare

In accordance with established procedures, when national and local budgets are developed and adopted, funds are earmarked as a matter of priority every year for child protection and development and the social protection of women and children under the programmes adopted.

The level of budget funding for children's education and welfare is steadily increasing. Between 2002 and 2006, public expenditure on social services increased by a factor of 2.5. For example, funds allocated to education increased by a factor of 2.6 and those allocated for the payment of allowances to families with children increased by a factor of 2.5.

Pattern of growth of public expenditure on specific elements of the welfare of families, mothers and children

	2003	*2004*	*2005*
Total expenditure	100	121.9	158.5
1. National education			
Total expenditure	100	122.3	158.6
Including maintenance of:			
Preschools	100	116	138.4
General-education and boarding schools	100	124.1	159.5
Mekhribonlik children's homes	100	148.3	151.4
Special boarding schools for children with physical or mental disabilities	100	122.2	147.5
Out-of-school institutions (after-school clubs, sports schools, centres for young tourists, technicians, naturalists, etc.)	100	123.5	166.1
Seven-year children's music schools and arts schools	100	109.2	147.2
Other expenditure	100	120.5	300.5
Expenditure on:			
Food	100	110.0	118.6
Free school supplies for first-grade pupils and winter clothes for children from needy families	100	111.1	120.6
2. Training			
Total expenditure	100	129.7	177.5
Including expenditure on:			
Academic high schools	100	128.9	226.8
Vocational colleges	100	136.9	184.5
3. Health care			
Total expenditure	100	92.8	101.0
Including expenditure on:			
Care for children with congenital hypothyroidism, phenylketonuria, cystic fibrosis and galactosaemia. Free nutritional care and drugs	100	117.7	287.5
Implementation of the project to strengthen women's and children's health	—	—	100
Vaccination and immunization of children	100	116.7	169.2
4. Social services			
Total expenditure on allowances	100	118.1	153.4

	2003	2004	2005
Including:			
Monthly childcare allowances for non-working mothers with children under 2	100	119.1	156.5
Allowances for needy families with children under 18	100	117.7	151.5
Financial assistance for needy families	100	114.7	148.6

System used to monitor the implementation of the Plan of Action and Millennium Development Goals concerning child welfare

Legislative bodies, the Government, specialized State bodies, local authorities and community associations pay close attention to progress made in the implementation of the child welfare programmes and plans of action that have been adopted.

Within the framework of the system used to monitor the achievement of child welfare goals, priority is given to respect for and measures to ensure implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as follows:

First: legislative and administrative/organizational measures. As part of a comprehensive approach to protecting the rights of the child, more than 50 legislative acts have been scrutinized in Uzbekistan to ensure compliance with the principles and provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. A group of national experts has drafted and submitted for further consideration bills on guarantees of the rights of the child and on juvenile justice;

Second: institutional basis for protecting the rights of the child. Robust efforts are being made to enhance the institutional system for the protection of human rights and freedoms, including the rights of the child, and to establish bodies to monitor compliance with human rights legislation. Two such bodies were established last year:

An institute for the oversight of existing legislation under the authority of the President of Uzbekistan was established by a presidential decree of 2 April 2005. Its main responsibilities are to review draft legislation to ensure that it conforms to the Constitution and international standards regarding human rights and freedoms and to monitor the implementation of laws in practice;

In accordance with an ordinance of the President of Uzbekistan of 15 December 2005, a centre was established under the Ministry of Justice to monitor the implementation of laws and regulations with a view to ensuring that the legal basis being established and law enforcement practice conform with the objectives and priorities of national reform and modernization;

Third: coordination of efforts between the Government and civic institutions and the establishment of a public oversight mechanism (outlined in the following paragraph):

Fourth: dissemination of information about the Convention. The Convention is regularly reissued in the Uzbek language. It is disseminated among schoolchildren, high-school and college students, civil servants and NGOs;

Fifth: strengthening international cooperation on the protection of the rights of the child. The main international partners include UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), WHO, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and, in Germany, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

The 1996 and 2002 national medical and demographic studies and the 2000 and 2006 Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys were important tools for obtaining data on the situation of women and children needed for monitoring progress towards implementing the Millennium Development Goals and the Plan of Action entitled "A world fit for children". The data obtained from the 2006 survey is expected to further strengthen the development and analysis of scientifically based Government policies and thereby to facilitate the development and implementation of more coherent policies for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the objectives of the programme entitled "A world fit for children".

Development of partnerships and associations for the well-being of children

The Children's Parliament project has been in operation in Uzbekistan since 2003 and is aimed at building capacity, increasing the participation of young people in decision-making and in taking action, and promoting a sense of active citizenship among young people.

More than 200 members of the Children's Parliament, elected from all the districts and towns of Uzbekistan, take part in addressing local social problems through educational and outreach programmes, including programmes on the prevention of HIV/AIDS, the rights of children and increasing public awareness about the Millennium Development Goals. They also take part in communication activities relating to salt iodization and flour fortification and the development of child-friendly schools.

During interactive training courses at the Children's Parliament sessions, which occur twice a year during school breaks, the young deputies gain life skills and increase their knowledge of the principles and provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, democratic ideas, transparency and the current national electoral system.

The participants convey to their contemporaries at school and at home the information received at the training sessions, in accordance with the principle of peer learning.

The main achievements of the Children's Parliament project are as follows:

- It has become a model for truly practical work with young people which may be applied to any part of Uzbekistan;
- It has gained public recognition and popularity among adults and children;

– It has facilitated partnerships with local government entities;

– Young deputies carry out much work at the local level with adult support;

– Young deputies play an active part in the development and implementation of town and district youth policies through specific social programmes;

– Significant public outreach work has been done to implement the national flour fortification programme and to raise awareness about the need to use iodized salt;

– There is a steady increase in the number of children participating in the outreach activities organized by the young deputies. This is a good indication of the progress of the project. More than 17,000 children have participated in training sessions on the rights of the child, a healthy lifestyle and the prevention of HIV/AIDS and drug abuse.

There are more than 5,000 non-governmental organizations in Uzbekistan, the majority of which deal with children's issues. They monitor observance of the rights of the child.

The scale and complexity of the task of thoroughly protecting the interests of the child demand closely coordinated action on the part of all NGOs dealing with children's issues in Uzbekistan.

For that purpose, some 100 Uzbek NGOs have created a coalition to provide tangible assistance to protect the rights and interests of children. The NGO coalition has conducted workshops to raise awareness among officials from local government, law enforcement agencies and private associations, regional deputies of the Ombudsman of Uzbekistan and journalists about issues concerning the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and juvenile justice.

The Children's Fund has led efforts to strengthen the capacity of the NGO coalition. All coalition members are actively involved in the implementation of the country's international obligations to fulfil the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the objectives of the international Leave No Child Out campaign, which was implemented in Uzbekistan between 2004 and 2006.

In 2006, the Child Welfare Coordinating Council of Uzbekistan was established within the Cabinet of Ministers. Its members include the heads of ministries, agencies, civic organizations and international organizations. It is a standing deliberative body responsible for coordinating the relevant agencies involved in protecting the rights and interests of children in Uzbekistan.

The non-governmental children's fund Sen Yolgiz Emassan ("You are not alone") has been working successfully and achieving results in Uzbekistan since 2003. Three international forums on children's issues have been conducted under the auspices of the fund, resulting in the adoption of specific recommendations which are being actively carried out.

Social partnerships with civic and charitable organizations are being strengthened. For more than 10 years Uzbekistan, in conjunction with the international charitable foundation Engrag, has held an international seminar for experts on disability issues and an international art competition for children with disabilities entitled "A world of captivating colours", in which up to 100 people take

part every year. Children from the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan participate in the competition.

International organizations such as UNICEF, UNFPA, USAID, WHO, JICA, KfW Bankengruppe, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank also play a large part in improving the welfare of children in Uzbekistan.

Achievements relating to the Plan of Action entitled "A world fit for children" and the Millennium Development Goals concerning children

Over the past few years, the Government of Uzbekistan has significantly expanded its capacity to conduct social reform along the lines of the Millennium Development Goals, to implement the provisions of the document entitled "A world fit for children" and to protect the rights of children and women.

As a signatory to the Millennium Declaration, Uzbekistan is meeting its obligations to tackle the problems set out in the Goals. The Government recognizes the relevance and urgency of these issues for national development.

In cooperation with the donor community and civil society, Uzbekistan has successfully adapted the Goals to the country's circumstances and has incorporated them into its interim national welfare enhancement strategy. Given that Uzbekistan's national Millennium Development Goals and the interim welfare enhancement strategy are both aimed at improving the standard of living, the development process for each complements the other. The Goals lay a firm basis for the implementation of the interim strategy.

The following is a breakdown of the accomplishments of recent years resulting from a range of targeted measures taken to implement the foregoing instruments. National objectives, the Millennium Development Goals and related achievements are provisionally grouped into four areas:

National objectives	*Achievements*
I. Promotion of a healthy lifestyle	
Goal 1: Reduce poverty and malnutrition	
Objective 1. Halve the poverty rate by 2015	The initial poverty level was 27.5 per cent (2001 World Bank estimates). It is expected to decrease to 14 per cent by 2015. In 2003 the figure was 26.2 per cent, in 2004 24.9 per cent and in 2005 26.2 per cent. The trends in malnutrition are clearly encouraging. According to studies (the 2002 national medical and demographic study and the 2006 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey), since 2002 the number of underweight children under the age of five has decreased by a factor of almost 1.6 (7.9 per cent in 2002 to 5.1 per cent in 2006).

National objectives	*Achievements*
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	
Objective 5. Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five by 2015	Infant mortality decreased by 12 per cent between 2002 and 2005 (to 14.9 per 1,000 live births). The mortality rate among children under 5 was 20.6 per 1,000 (2005), which was 18 per cent lower than the rate in 2002. Meanwhile, according to the 2002 medical and demographic study and the 2006 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, infant mortality (according to the accepted WHO definitions of live birth and child mortality) decreased from 61.7 per 1,000 live births to 48.5 per 1,000, or 28.5 per cent. The mortality rate among children under 5 decreased by 28.6 per cent (from 73.3 per 1,000 in 2002 to 57 per 1,000 in 2005).
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	
Objective 6: Reduce the maternal mortality rate by one third by 2015	The maternal mortality rate has decreased by 8 per cent to 29.7 per 1,000 live births.
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria	
Objective 7. Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015	The incidence of HIV/AIDS has increased from 5.5 per cent to 7 per cent owing to improved diagnostics; targeted efforts to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS have been strengthened. Uzbekistan has implemented a strategic programme to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS for 2003-2006. A State programme for 2007-2011 has now been developed.
Objective 8. Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of tuberculosis and malaria by 2015	According to a WHO world health report, the incidence of tuberculosis per 100,000 persons (after seven years of steady growth) has begun to decrease. In 2005 there were 76 cases compared to 80 in 2002. The Directly Observed Treatment Shortcourse (DOTS) strategy implemented in Uzbekistan is available to more than 80 per cent of the population. Uzbekistan has registered only isolated cases of malaria.
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	
Objective 9. Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources by 2015	In addition to the package of strategic instruments being implemented to address environmental issues, an environmental information system has been developed, incorporating 91 environmental indicators which are effective in monitoring the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

National objectives	*Achievements*
Objective 10. Increase the proportion of rural and urban inhabitants with access to safe drinking water and sanitation by 2015	The proportion of people with access to safe drinking water has increased by 3.4 points to reach 83.8 per cent, and among the rural population it has grown from 71.0 to 78.5 per cent. Some 40 per cent of the urban population and 5 per cent of the rural population have gained access to sanitation facilities. According to the 2006 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, the proportion of people using improved drinking water sources was 89.6 per cent and the proportion using improved sanitation facilities was 99.4 per cent.
II. Promotion of quality in education	
Goal 2: Improve the quality of education in primary and secondary schools	
Objective 2. Improve the quality of primary and general secondary education by 2015 while preserving universal access	Under the 2004-2009 State programme for the development of formal education, school facilities have been further enhanced, schools have been provided with modern laboratory equipment, furniture and computers, and teaching conditions in rural and urban schools have been standardized. Schools are being staffed with teachers with the necessary qualifications and level of education and are being supplied with modern textbooks and training manuals that meet national educational standards.
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	
Objective 3. Achieve gender equality in primary, secondary and vocational education by 2015	The State guarantees equal access for boys and girls to primary and secondary education and to specialized and vocational secondary education. Gender equality in the primary education system is determined by the number of girls and boys born. There are 2.9 million female pupils and 3 million male pupils in general-education schools, of whom 1.1 million and 1.2 million, respectively, are in primary schools and 1.5 million and 1.6 million in grades 5 to 9. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, the gender representation coefficient (of boys and girls who receive an education) was 1.0 in primary schools and 0.98 in secondary schools.
Objective 4. Achieve gender equality in higher education by 2015	In 2005, 59,600 persons were accepted into Uzbek institutions of higher education (54,200 to bachelor's programmes and 5,400 to master's programmes), which is 1.33 times more than in 2000 (the numbers increased by factors of 1.3 and 2, respectively).

National objectives	*Achievements*
	There has been a sharp increase in the number of women accepted into Uzbek institutions of higher education: the number has increased by 44.3 per cent, whereas the number of men accepted into such institutions has increased by only 26.8 per cent. In addition, in higher education, the proportion of women among all bachelor's degree students has reached 41 per cent and among master's degree students 37.2 per cent.
Mobilization of resources	
	A national plan of action has been developed for the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. It is overseen by the Cabinet of Ministers, which is responsible for ensuring inter-agency coordination and cooperation at the national and local levels in implementing the Convention. Non-governmental organizations monitor observance of the rights of the child.
IV. Protection of children from abuse, exploitation and violence	
	As part of a comprehensive approach to protecting the rights of the child more than 50 legislative acts have been scrutinized to ensure compliance with the principles and provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. A group of national experts is drafting bills on guarantees of the rights of the child and on juvenile justice with the participation of NGOs. The Children's Parliament has also prepared its own version of the bill on guarantees of the rights of the child. Government programmes are adopted and carried out every year to implement maternity and child protection measures, strengthen the health of mothers and children, improve reproductive health, enhance a culture of health and healthy living in the family and provide for the birth and rearing of physically strong and well-balanced children.

7. Experience and initiatives with regard to improving the well-being of children and facilitating the implementation of the Plan of Action entitled "A world fit for children" and the Millennium Development Goals

Besides the special programmes, plans of action and Government decisions concerning children in Uzbekistan referred to in the previous sections of this report, it has become customary to dedicate each year to a specific issue, to develop appropriate programmes for the year and, accordingly, to mobilize the efforts and capacities of governmental, non-governmental and civic organizations, sponsors and volunteers to address specific priority issues.

The following points should be mentioned:

Firstly, regardless of the name of a given year and whether it relates to the family or women, healthy child-rearing, the development of the makhallyas or protection of the interests of the older generation, all years share a focus on the individual, his or her life, dreams, happiness and concerns;

Secondly, practically every year the special programmes include frameworks and a set of specific measures to promote the interests and well-being of children.

Components of individual year programmes relating to children are set out below.

Soglom Avlod Programme (Healthy generation) (2000)

Improving the conditions for raising healthy families and fostering high spiritual and moral standards in the family;

Increasing the focus of Government, society and the family on ensuring the birth of healthy children;

Facilitating better health, education and balanced child-rearing;

Boosting the social and economic status and role of women in the family and society;

Establishing and developing a comprehensive outreach programme on sound and responsible parenting and bearing and raising healthy children;

Raising awareness in society about the important responsibility for bearing and raising well-rounded, balanced and healthy children.

Year of Mothers and Children (2001)

Creating the necessary environment for the strong health of pregnant women and the bearing of healthy children and for their supervision and care with the help of modern medical equipment;

Monitoring children constantly from birth, protecting them from factors which threaten their healthy development, providing them with regular inoculations against various diseases and taking other preventive measures;

Providing appropriate physical and spiritual education to children from an early age and following, in every family, the recommendations of modern medicine, education and psychology;

Strengthening the role of parents and teachers in raising children of preschool age on the basis of the traditions and customs inherited from our ancestors, in a spirit of respect for national values, using contemporary teaching methods and teaching children in depth about the wealth and diversity of the outside world;

Imparting to children, particularly during their first years of primary education, knowledge of and respect for national traditions and values as well as a broad world view and interest in foreign languages and universal human values;

Strengthening the role of mothers and the family in child-rearing and in the child's physical and spiritual development until adulthood and the indissoluble bond between mother and child in all these processes.

Year of Protection of the Interests of the Older Generation (2002)

Promoting the active involvement of older people in social reforms and healthy child-rearing, and perpetuating and passing on to young people their wealth of professional and life experience, positive traditions and cultural values;

Improving the system of raising and teaching children and young people to respect, honour and care for their parents and the older generation.

Year of the Makhallya (2003)

Strengthening the social protection of needy families and support for young families;

Improving medical and health spa services for the makhallya population;

Developing youth sports;

Increasing the activities of the makhallya with regard to spiritual and moral education for young people.

Year of Kindness and Mercy (2004)

Strengthening the family, protecting motherhood and childhood and instilling in young people a sense of respect for the older generation.

Year of Health (2005)

Improving the protection of motherhood, childhood and reproductive health, enhancing a culture of health and promoting healthy living in the family;

Preventing communicable diseases;

Providing the population with safe drinking water and healthy living conditions and protecting the environment;

Promoting physical activities throughout the population and encouraging children, women and families to participate in sports.

Year of Charity and Medical Workers (2006)

Providing material assistance and moral support for needy families;

Improving conditions in specialized social welfare institutions and providing educational institutions with better equipment;

Promoting the treatment and recovery of needy citizens, children and persons with disabilities.

The following initiatives for the near future should be mentioned:

1. The development for 2007 of a State programme entitled "Year of Social Protection". This programme includes a range of measures to provide social protection for vulnerable groups. It also provides for special measures concerning children's issues, including:

Providing better equipment to Mekhribonlik homes and specialized boarding schools, increasing attention to and care for children without family support and making a reality of the lofty motto "You are not alone";

Further expanding measures to foster a physically healthy and spiritually enriched generation, addressing the needs of mothers and children more effectively and promoting the "Healthy mother, healthy child" movement;

Further enhancing mechanisms to stimulate and properly evaluate the work of social service personnel;

Protecting the vital interests of young people, creating the conditions necessary for the development of their capabilities and potential, supporting young families with moral and financial incentives when they embark on independent life and granting loans on favourable terms to young families;

2. Completion of the consideration and adoption and start of the implementation of the national child welfare programme for 2007-2011 which sets out measures based on the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child following the submission of the second periodic report on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (19 May 2006).